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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 003976

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [IT](#) [EUN](#) [ESDP](#) [CFSP](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY'S EU PRESIDENCY - ITALY SATISFIED WITH RESULTS OF AUGUST 27 ESDP MEETING

REF: STATE 235459

CLASSIFIED BY: A/POL MINISTER-COUNSELOR GARY ROBBINS.  
REASON: 1.5 (B)(D).

11. (C) ON SEPTEMBER 1, MFA EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT AND ESDP COORDINATOR SANDRO DE BERNADIN TOLD POLOFF THAT OVERALL, THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY WAS SATISFIED THAT THE "GANG OF FOUR" PROPOSAL FOR AN EU PLANNING OFFICE AT TERVUREN RECEIVED NO SUPPORT FROM THE OTHER EU MEMBERS AND ACCESSION COUNTRIES AT THE AUGUST 29 ESDP MEETING IN ROME. DE BERNADIN NOTED THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, THE PROPOSAL IS NOT COMPLETELY SHELVED. GERMANY, FRANCE, LUXEMBOURG AND BELGIUM WILL PROCEED WITH THE IDEA OF A PLANNING OPERATION OUTSIDE OF THE EU/NATO/BERLIN-PLUS FRAMEWORK. THE FOUR PROVIDED NO TIMELINE OR OTHER DETAILS FOR MAKING THE UNIT OPERATIONAL.

12. (C) DE BERNADIN'S VIEW IS THAT THE FOUR STUCK TO THEIR POSITION IN ROME AS A FACE-SAVING MEASURE. HE IS OPTIMISTIC THEY WILL EVENTUALLY DISCARD COMPLETELY THE TERVUREN IDEA, PROVIDED THAT THERE IS NO WAVERING IN THE OPPOSITION OF THE 21 OTHER EU MEMBERS/ASPIRANTS, AND THAT THE EU CONTINUES TO PURSUE THE POSSIBILITY OF A PLANNING CELL WITHIN SHAPE OR SIMILAR OPTIONS THAT WOULD BOTH ADDRESS CONCERNS OUTLINED IN THE APRIL 29 SUMMIT DOCUMENT AND CONTINUE TO PROTECT THE NATO-ESDP RELATIONSHIP AS OUTLINED IN THE BERLIN-PLUS AGREEMENT.

13. (C) LOOKING AHEAD, DE BERNADIN SAID TERVUREN WAS NOT ON THE AGENDA FOR THE SEPTEMBER 5-6 GYMnich, OTHER THAN A SHORT WRITTEN STATEMENT ON MEETING RESULTS TO BE DISTRIBUTED BY THE PRESIDENCY. THE PRESIDENCY WOULD CONTINUE TO PUSH THE EU AS A WHOLE TO FIND COMMON GROUND WITH THE FOUR AT WORKING LEVELS IN BRUSSELS. WHILE TAKING NOTE OF USG CONCERNS OVER "STRUCTURED COOPERATION" (REFTEL) REITERATED BY POLOFF, DE BERNADIN SAID THAT ITALY WAS OPEN TO CONSIDERING CHANGES TO CURRENT EU PROCEDURES WHEREBY CFSP/ESDP DECISIONS ARE ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS ONLY. HE SAID THAT ITALY IS ENGAGED IN BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH A NUMBER OF ITS EU PARTNERS - INCLUDING THE UK, WHICH REMAINS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO DROPPING CONSENSUS BASED DECISION MAKING FOR SECURITY RELATED INITIATIVES - TO DETERMINE IF QUALIFIED MAJORITY VOTING FOR CFSP/ESDP COULD BE ADOPTED IN A MANNER THAT WOULD NOT JEOPARDIZE BERLIN-PLUS.

SEMBLER

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